

Prevalence of Sexual Assault

“In the United States, a rape is reported about once every five minutes.”

-FBI Uniform Crime Report, 2000

“1 in 33 men (3%) and 1 in 6 women (17%) reported experiencing an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives.”

-National Institute of Justice, 2000

“Nearly 70 percent of victims know their attacker.”

-2003 National Crime Victimization Survey

“In calendar year 2004 there were 1,700 reported sexual assaults in the Military Services. 123 of these occurred in Southwest Asia.”

“Out of the 1,700 reported sexual assaults - there were 104 reported assaults on men.”

-DoD CY04 Annual Report to Congress –
Sexual Assault in the Military Services

S A P R O
Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Office

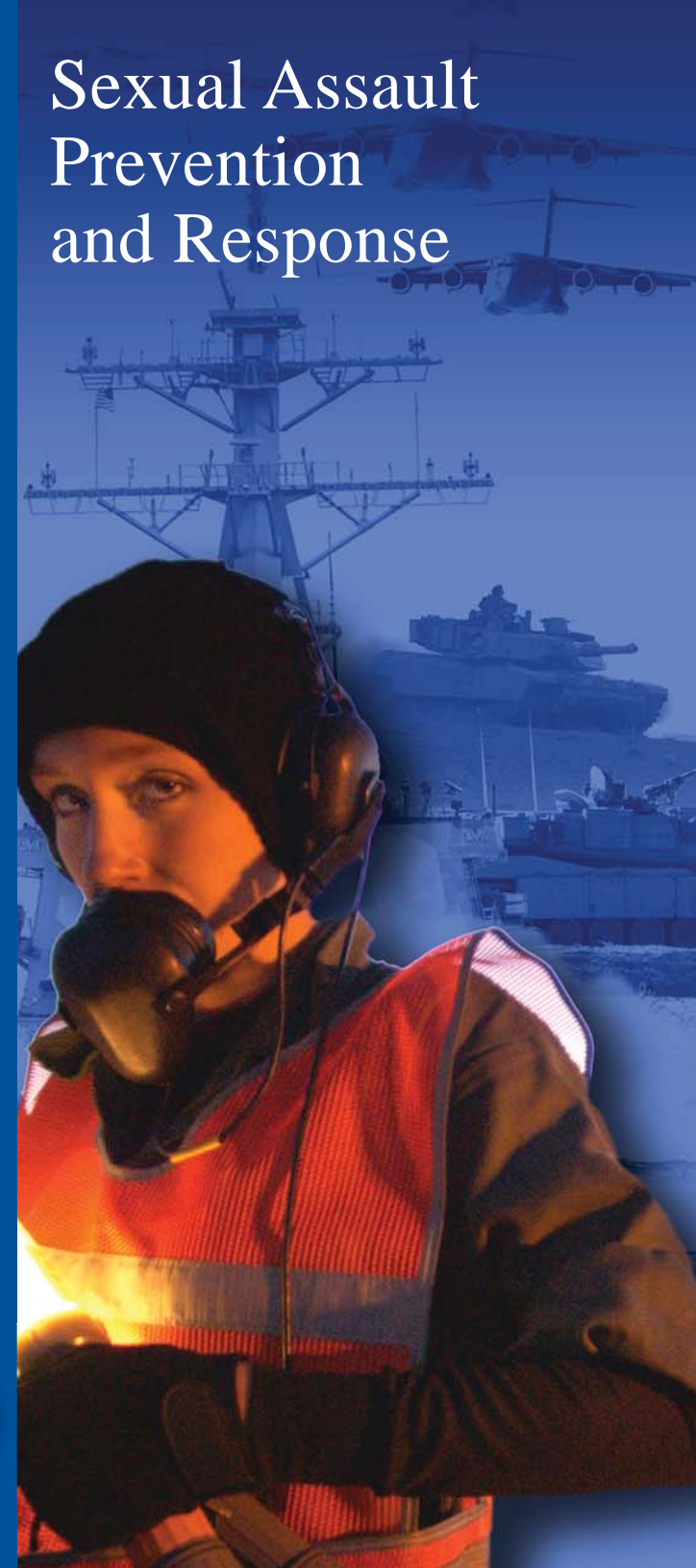
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United States Department of Defense

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Sexual Assault Prevention and Response



Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program

The Department of Defense (DoD) -- from Secretary Rumsfeld to unit commanders in the field -- remain committed to eliminating sexual assault from the ranks of the military. Sexual assault is a crime. It inflicts incalculable harm on victims and their families; it tears at the very fabric of civilian and military communities; and it destroys trust among individuals and faith in our institutions. DoD has made significant progress in combating sexual assault by introducing a comprehensive sexual assault prevention and response policy and implementing it across the Military Services.

Confidential Reporting

Confidentiality represents the most significant single change in sexual assault policy, and it addresses a major barrier to reporting. Many victims are not emotionally prepared for a criminal investigation due to fear, embarrassment, shame, and a sense of violation that may follow an assault. Previous policy of automatic and immediate initiation of law enforcement action often deterred the victims from stepping forward.

Confidentiality takes direct aim at this barrier by providing victims two reporting options—restricted and unrestricted reporting. Restricted reporting, allows victims to receive medical treatment and support without automatically triggering a criminal investigation. This reporting option provides victims with more control over the release of their personal information and affords them additional time to weigh their options and seek guidance about whether or not to participate in a criminal investigation.

Victims who desire treatment and/or support as well as an investigation can select unrestricted reporting. This reporting option ensures that in addition to providing medical

treatment, advocacy, and counseling for victims of sexual assault, command authorities are notified and a criminal investigation is initiated.

A victim must acknowledge in writing on a Victim Reporting Preference Statement his or her preference for restricted or unrestricted reporting and how the reporting option may limit the ability of the Government to prosecute the offender. The Preference Statement also lists the exceptions that apply to restricted reporting. The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) or Victim Advocate (VA) is responsible for advising the victim of the reporting options available to him or her, explaining the benefits and limitations of each, and documenting the reporting option the victim selects.

Dedicated Support

DoD also mandated Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) to synchronize prevention and response efforts at installations and vessels. They serve as the single point of contact to coordinate sexual assault victim care and to track the services provided from initial report of a sexual assault through disposition and resolution of the victim's healthcare and support service needs.

The policy also stipulates that Victim Advocates (VAs) provide 24/7 direct response to victims. They are not counselors, therapists, or investigators. Instead, VAs help the victim navigate the system and explain available options and resources.

Education and Training

Equally important, the Department now requires that education and training be conducted throughout every service member's career at both the unit level and at all professional

military education programs. Clear definitions of sexual assault and sexual harassment have been established to provide service members with understandable expectations of their role in preventing these behaviors. The end result will be a climate of greater confidence that prompts victims to seek treatment and to report sexual assaults.

In Closing

These initiatives represent only the beginning of DoD's long-term effort to eliminate sexual assault from its ranks. This societal problem has no place in the Armed Forces, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has clearly stated his policy of zero tolerance. In the years to come, the Military Services will continue their efforts to vigorously institutionalize their sexual assault programs and work closely with the Department to refine DoD policies and to establish them as the benchmark for other organizations to follow.

For more information about the DoD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program and Service specific resources visit us online at: www.sapr.mil.

Contact your local Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) for information about your local sexual assault prevention and response program.

